RICE
Teacher EDUCATION
LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.

EDUCATION POLICY: FROM LEGISLATURES TO CLASSROOMS
EDUC 350/550, Spring 2018
Thursdays 6:00-9:00 pm
Location: HBH 22

Instructor: Scott Hochberg
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For additional information, please also see the Course Information document on Canvas.

Schedule and Assignments

UPDATED 1/2/17 – Very Tentative, depending on class size and interests

Please note: Topics to be covered and when they are covered will vary due to the activities of the Texas Legislature and courts, the specific interests of the students, opportunities for guest speakers, etc. The schedule may also be changed to provide sufficient time for class participation depending on the number of students enrolled in the class.

All assignments are to be considered tentative until assigned by the instructor in class.

1/11 **Legislating Education Policy**

- Who's in charge here? Who makes education policy, and who influences them?
- Legislative simulation. Students will play roles of various interests in arguing for or against proposed legislation related to special education policy.

1/18 **Legislating Education Policy – continued**

- Why do we have a system of public education? What should be its goals?
- Discuss Kinder Study.
- How does the Texas Legislature work and how do you find information about what it is doing?

Curriculum Wars -- What gets taught to whom, who decides, and how do they decide?

- Discuss various levels of curriculum determination, from diploma requirements to lesson plans
- Introduce overall curriculum battles
    - National curriculum standards vs standards vs local decisions
    - Experts vs democracy

1/25 **Curriculum Wars – continued**

- How Texas selects course content
    - Discuss "The Revisionaries"
    - Watch the Texas SBOE debate Social Studies textbooks
- Texas curriculum standards vs. Common Core
- Discuss criteria for evaluation curriculum standards.

Legislating Education Policy - continued

- Class Presentations on legislation (first set)

2/1 **Curriculum Wars – continued**

- Discuss state standards evaluations from Fordham report.
- Are Texas' standards actually teachable? (Discuss length and level of detail)
- What should a student have to learn to earn a diploma?
    - Class exercise – Algebra II EOC
    - Watch debate over Texas graduation requirements, and discuss

Legislating Education Policy – continued

- Class Presentations on legislation (second set)

2/8 **No Class – Spring Recess**

2/15 **Curriculum Wars – continued**

- Discuss writing assignment – finish common core discussion.

Data in Education Policy – Good, bad and ugly

- Discuss various ways data is used
- Discuss some examples of poor presentation or misrepresentation of education data

2/22 **Data in Education Policy – continued**

- Discuss "The Signal and the Noise"

Accountability - How do we know the curriculum gets taught, and that students learn?

"Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?"
Governor George W. Bush, Jan. 11, 2000.

- Evolution of testing and accountability systems
- Class exercise – Create an accountability system

3/1 **Accountability Issues - Continued**

- Discuss readings – Potential benefits and harms of high-stakes testing
- What do school rating mean? Looking inside the Texas school rating system
- How are passing scores set?
- How are scores rolled up into campus and district ratings?

3/8 **Accountability Issues – Continued**

- Proposed changes to the Texas rating system
- Figuring out if changes in ratings are real or the result of changes in the system?
- Pulling apart the Texas Projection Measure
- Do accountability systems work, and toward what ends
- Does every student need to be tested every year?

3/15 **No Class – Spring Break**

3/22 **Funding our Schools**

- Does money matter?
- What does education cost and why is there no single answer to that?
    - student effects
    - other differential cost
- Class exercise – cost examples
- Where does the money come from?
    - Types of taxes, characteristics of each
    - Implications of a local property tax based system
    - Class exercise –local tax examples
    - show real world examples
- How does the state system interact?
    - Class exercise – state/local sharing examples

3/29 **Funding our Schools – Continued**

- The recapture solution
- Where does the system fall short, and why is it so hard to fix?
- The schools turn to the courts – Discussion of Texas school finance cases.
    - Is the system efficient?
    - Is the system suitable?
    - Does the system represent an illegal statewide property tax?

Does One Size Fit All? – Special Populations Introduction

- General overview of special populations – what are various categories, how large a percentage of the student population, etc.

4/5 **School Discipline – Is there a "school-to-prison pipeline" and does it matter?**

- zero tolerance policies
- expulsion and suspension, alternative schools
- ticketing of students for school offenses
- impact on special populations

4/12 **What's it like being a legislator? –** Students ask questions of the instructor

Does One Size Fit All? – Special Populations

Class discussions – policy issues re special populations

Discussion of Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District RE–1 – decided 3/22/17 by U.S. Supreme Court

4/19 **Discuss Final Takeaways**

Student Final Paper Oral Presentations

Blow up the system – Vouchers, Charters, Virtual Schools, Alternative Governance

- Are school boards the problem? Does democracy and local control really work?
- School choice options. Charters/Vouchers/Home Schooling/Magnets/Virtual
- Why do some charters work great and others crash and burn?

5/2 **Final Papers Due – End of Finals Week** – **Submit by email no later than 5:00 PM, 5/2/18**